

51. (Currently Amended) A functional element according to claim 44, comprising in the form of a nut element.

52. A functional element according to claim 44, comprising a tube section high pressure formed into said head part and said shaft part.

53. A functional element according to claim 44, comprising at least one of a tube section, wire material, and bar stock cold formed into said head part and said shaft part.

54. A functional element and panel assembly forming a fluid tight seal, said assembly comprising:

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a panel having a pot-like recess merging via a radially inwardly projecting ring fold into a planar portion of said panel and a functional element, said functional element comprising

a shaft part having a shaft diameter defining a shaft axis;

a head part axially aligned with said shaft part; and

wherein said head part includes an annular wall deformably compressed thereby forming a first generally annular bulge and second generally annular bulge sandwiching at least ~~a portion~~ said ring fold of said panel therebetween with said first generally annular bulge received in said pot-like recess thereby securing said functional element to said panel.

55. The assembly as set forth in claim ~~52~~54, wherein said panel forms a continuous sheet surrounding said head part of said ~~fastening~~ functional element.

56. The assembly as set forth in claim ~~52~~54, wherein said head ~~portion~~ part includes a distal end deformed inwardly toward said shaft ~~portion~~ part thereby defining a generally concave shape.

57. The assembly as set forth in claim ~~52~~54, wherein said first generally annular bulge is disposed in a plane generally equal to a plane defined by said panel.